

## **REMARKS**

In view of the above amendments and the following remarks, reconsideration and further examination are requested.

Claims 1-4 have been rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Tsuji (US 2003/0232562) in view of Fair (US 6,204,483). This rejection is traversed and is inapplicable to claims 1-4 as amended, and new claims 5 and 6 for at least the following reasons.

The newly claimed features recited in claim 1 of “heating means on any one of a top face and a bottom face of the cooling area; and cooling means on the other one of the top face and the bottom face of the cooling area” are not disclosed or suggested in Tsuji, Fair, or any obvious combination thereof.

Claim 1 also recites plural conveying means divided with heat insulating walls so as to constitute multi-stage heat treatment rooms in the baking furnace, and that each of the multi-stage heat treatment rooms comprises a heating area, a keeping area and a cooling area. By including heating means and cooling means in the cooling area, both the substrate and the conveying means can be heated or cooled to a predetermined temperature (see, paragraph 0042). That is both the temperature of the substrate and the temperature of the conveying means can be controlled precisely with this configuration, whereby even substrates of PDP, which are large in size and thin, can be baked without any problem (see, paragraph 0013).

The Examiner acknowledges that Tsuji does not disclose plural stages on conveying means divided with heat insulating walls as recited in claim 1, and relies on Fair for plural conveying means and a heat insulating partition 34.

While Fair discloses a first bank 30 of heating elements 35, and a second bank 32 of heating elements 36, the element 34 is merely the substrate to be heated. Thus, Tsuji does not disclose plural stages of conveying means divided with heat insulating walls, and Fair simply shows a first bank of heating elements and a second bank of heating elements with the substrate between the two. Based on the previous rejection, it seems possible that the Examiner would rely on the substrate itself as the “heat insulating walls” recited in claim 1 as amended. However, with such a construction neither of Tsuji and Fair teaches, and no obvious combination of Tsuji and Fair would include, plural stages of conveying means divided with heat insulating walls so as to constitute multi-stage heat treatment rooms each having a heating area, a keeping

area and a cooling area in order in a traveling direction of the conveying means, with heating means on any one of a top face and a bottom face of the cooling area, and cooling means on the other one of the top face and the bottom face of the cooling area, as recited in claim 1 as amended.

In view of the above, it is submitted that claims 1-6 are allowable over the prior art of record and that the present application is in condition for allowance.

The Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned by telephone should there be any issues remaining.

Respectfully submitted,

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